

FINAL FREE TRIAL ISSUE!

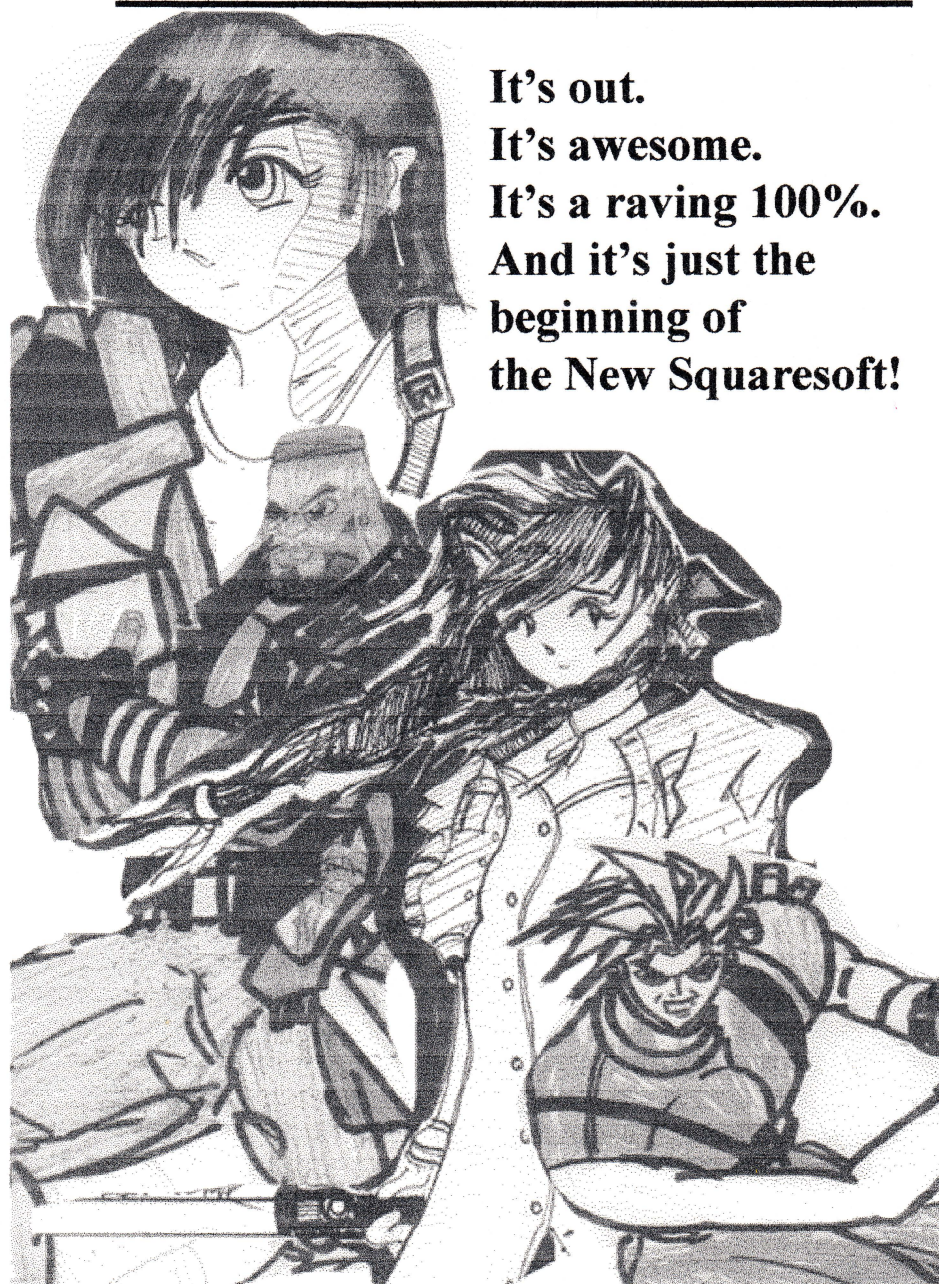
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

FREE

GAMERAVE

ARCADE IMPORTS NINTENDO 64 PLAYSTATION SATURN

FINAL FANTASY VII



**It's out.
It's awesome.
It's a raving 100%.
And it's just the
beginning of
the New Squaresoft!**

INSIDE:

What's Wrong
With the number

'3'?

We Take A
Look Back
At Sega's
32X

In Reviews:

Golden Eye
MRC

Rabbit

Playstation

Saturn

Nintendo 64

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Still working on that one...

City Hunter

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Alas, the time has come...

To the readers,

To say I was completely surprised by the way this trial run turned out would be an understatement. The first two issues of Game Rave sent out roughly two hundred and fifty copies, with every single one being scooped up. We ran into some real trouble with issue two, but most of the problems seem to be ironed out. With this third and final trial issue though, I must make a confession; Game Rave will be going into seclusion for a while.

This is the first time we have ever tried to do something of this magnitude, and we were impressed that it turned out so well. I want to thank each and every one of you who picked up this, or any other issue. Double kudos to you if you have all three issues. However, when one is publishing a magazine, he or she can not do it alone. With such a wide audience forming, and the demand for more up to date info and more hardcore reviews increasing, we need to regroup, reorganize, and retool the magazine. In order to do this, we must have a 'free period' to work in, and closing this trial run is just the thing we need to do.

Let me restate that this is not the end of Game Rave itself. This is merely the end of the trial run. If all goes well, and we can get our act in synch with the universe, the brand new Game Rave #1 should be out sometime in January or February 1998. The size, price, content, and presentation are all going to be revamped, and we want to get it right the first time.

However, we will still be in contact with the consumer, and want to let you know that we listen to and read any mail that our readers send. If you have anything you like to tell us, any suggestions you want to contribute, please, by all means send them in!

To reach us by snail mail, send your letters to:

Game Rave



To reach us by e-mail, contact us at:



(List subject as "Game Rave")

And with that, I give you the final trial run of Game Rave. Here's hoping that 1998 will be a 'raving' good time.

Till next we meet,

Jason Dvorak
Editor in Chief

What's wrong with

The Bad "Three's" of Gaming:

Samurai Shodown
Phantasy Star
Y's
Street Fighter
Mortal Kombat
Sonic
Fatal Fury
Bonk
Toh Shin Den
32X
3DO

The Good "Three's" of Gaming:

Art of Fighting
King of Fighter's
Final Fantasy (usa)
Super Mario Bros.
Mega Man
Castlevania

Still Pending:

Tekken
Virtua Fighter

Sit back and think for a moment, about all the sequels you have ever played, and what is the one disturbing factor that comes to mind? The number '3'. In the last 5 years of video games, we have seen titles reach their upper numbers, but the third in the series always seems the worst, or is the beginning in that series' downfall. *Street Fighter*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Samurai Shodown*, *Fatal Fury*, *Splatterhouse*, *Y's*, *Sonic*, and others have all fallen prey to the predator '3'. At Game Rave, we sat down and attempted to unravel the mystery of this phenomenon. After only minutes of pondering, the answers become quite clear.

A sequel is a game that follows up a previous game, be it by title alone (such as *Final Fantasy*), or it may carry on the story of the previous game's characters (like *SF* and *MK*), or it may hold a common theme (say the 'Strike' series by EA). A sequel's job is to work off of the previous game's attempts, and hopefully better it with superior graphics and sound, fresh ideas, and new play mechanics. When these items fall through, or are warped beyond their boundaries, the sequel will then falter, and it will lose many of it's followers.

Our first examples are *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter*. When both titles released their '2' sequel, all hell broke loose. *Street Fighter II* started an entire genre of copycats and 'fighting game' wars that forever changed the arcade outlook. *MK II* continued the trend of 'blood and gore', with awesome fatalities and some political involvement as well. When *Mortal Kombat 3* came on the scene, though, the steam rolling process all but came to a screeching halt. The third sequel had shown that the Boon/Tobias team was fallible, with horrible recreations of favored characters, stupid fatalities (Jax as a giant? Arcade machine drops and tack spitting?) and a poorly designed combo system. When *Ultimate MK 3* was released, the dying horse could not be kicked for anything. More carbon copies and more of the same brought the *MK* series to it's own 'fatality.' *Street Fighter III* was almost the complete opposite. Here was a sequel some six years in the waiting. And what does Capcom do? Drop about every character known to *SF* legend. Ryu and Ken were thrown in for newbies, and the only thing that kept it afloat were the awesome animations. Capcom of Japan is now tetsing a *SF III Dash*, but I doubt that that can save it.

With *Y's* and *Samurai Shodown*, the creators were trying to do something fresh and new, but instead marred the very game they were trying to make shine. In *Y's* case, was the fact that an overhead game of mass proportions and adventure suddenly became a side scrolling adventure. This severely limited the choices you could make, and left gamers running back to the first two. SNK destroyed a religion with *Samurai Shodown 3's* new control layout. Rather than having the two punch/two kick layout, they changed it to a three slash/one kick set up. Not only did this throw gamers off for a while, but when one realized the hard slash move did more damage then most of the special moves, most gamers went back to 2. In their defense, both games' '4' counterparts were well done, as *Y's* went back to it's overhead roots and SNK fixed the damage problem and brought back old favorites to the line up.

How do game companies remedy this problem? By staying true to that particular game's roots. SNK has been doing a great job with the *King of Fighters* series, by keeping most of the teams, rebalancing the returning characters and adding fresh meat to the boss departments. The core of the game is still there, they merely change it's surrounding. Square has kept the *Final Fantasy* series going strong by

COVER FEATURE

III

the number three?

adding a new play mechanic to each new title and starting completely anew in the story department for each game. They keep the series tied to each other through the one standard character 'Cid', who's been an extra character since *FF IV*.

What's so amazing is how the '3' problem can also be applied to systems. Take the '3'DO for example. Here was a system that showed great potential, but was lost to way overpriced hardware and software, and then had a terrible developers kit to go with it. With few licensees and unfriendly workings, the system was abandoned by both the player and the company that made it. It now sits with the Jaguar in the bargain basement along with our next victim, the 32X. This was Sega of America's third system, and like the 3DO, showed great promise. But Sega stretched themselves too far, and it fell too.

So what can be done about the number three? With the coming of *Tomb Raider 2* and *Resident Evil 2*, one wonders if these chart topping sequels will even make it to a '3'. And if they do, will they fall victim to the plague like their silicon brothers before them? What about *Tekken 3*, *Virtua Fighter 3*? Will these be able to stand against the fury once they reach the home systems? Only time, and the companies that make them, will know for sure.

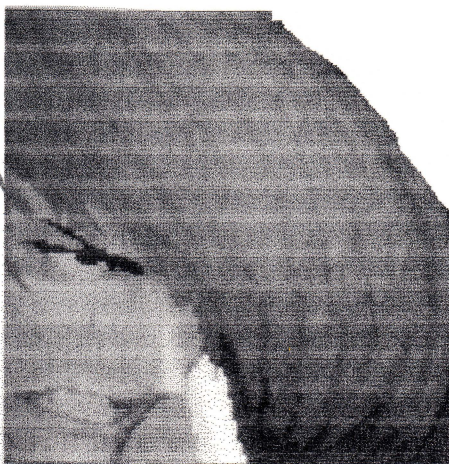
But we have some solutions that can help. First and foremost, companies must realize that if a sequel is to survive, it must be both entirely new, yet keep close to it's core the very thing that made the first game so successful. *Tobal No. 2* is the teacher's pet in this case. Square completely overhauled the graphics and music, fixed things here and there, and expanded the RPG mode. The result was an outstanding achievement and an incredible joy to play. *Twisted Metal 2* gave players more advanced play areas and newer characters to mess around with.

A sequel must also be able to live up to if not surpass it's older brother. Capcom sent *Resident Evil 2* back to the drawing boards to make sure it met that standard. By doing this, a company can assure themselves and the gamer that game will be all it should be, and won't require a *Samurai Shodown 4* or an *SF III Dash* to 'fix' the obvious mistakes.

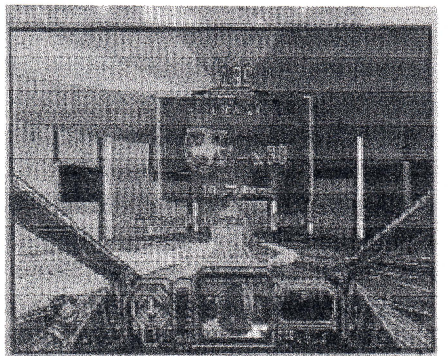
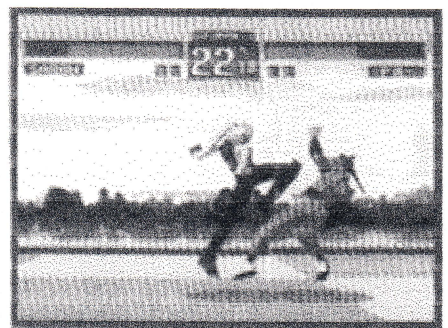
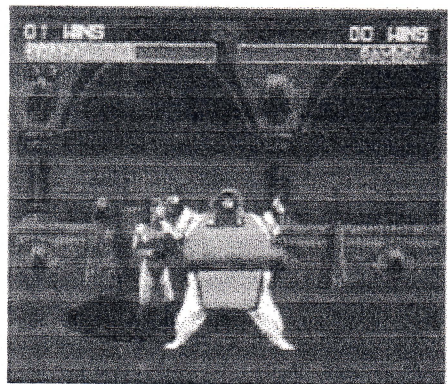
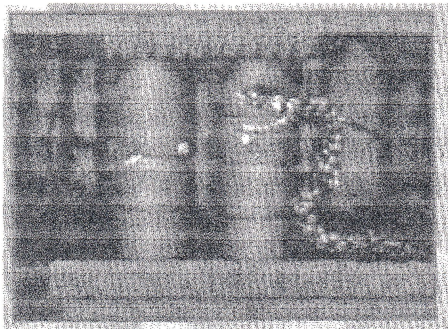
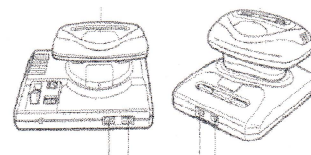
The most important aspect though, is the public awareness. How many of you remember the ads for *Toh Shin Den 1*? True, it was anchored to the system's release, but it was still advertised like crazy. Anybody remember that many ads for 2 or 3? The most those got were one page ads in magazines. If you let everyone and their brother know you have a game, they will come to take a look. The best example for this is *Final Fantasy 7*. Sony has been spending million on this, both TV (. "Thankfully, you have a reset button.") and magazine spreads ("Coming to a screen near you."). Even if you don't play role playing games, you still know that *FF 7* exists. Just like you should.

As long as companies can remember to stick to the ideas that made a particular game great, without being too similar, or alienating it from the previous titles, they'll stay on top with quality products and gamer support. And that's something everyone can benefit from.

Remember, the third time is *supposed* to be the charm.



Objects in the Mirror



A long time ago in a 16-Bit galaxy not so far away, Sega of America released what they thought was a great idea for the money starved gamers; the 32X. Toted as the 'In-expensive Alternative' to the then looming \$400 Saturn and \$300 Playstation, it joined the Sega CD in the add-on department of the Genesis.

The 32X when it was released cost \$150 and games were about \$60-65. With games like *Virtua Racing*, *Shadow Squadron*, and *Metal Head* at launch, it showed great promise of living up to it's hype.

The system ran into a slight wall, and that was the fact that it was another upgrade. Consumers had just spent roughly \$200 to buy the Sega CD, and at the time, that wasn't exactly paying itself off. While the Sega CD was drowning in rehashed cartridge hand-me-ups, the 32X struggled to prove itself, and just when it looked like it was going to make it, Sega slit it's own throat.

They released the Saturn early.

And suddenly gamers everywhere were flooded in the Sega sea of silicon. In the same light, Sega of America stretched themselves past the breaking point.

CD/ 32X owners were then sort of left out to dry. Yes there were still great games like *Lunar 1 and 2*, *Terminator CD*, *Popful Mail*, *Dark Wizard*, *Silpheed*, *Chaotix* and *Afterburner*, but they could feel the beginning of the end. The CD was killed off by both Sega's and Digital Pictures' FMV crap like *Wirehead* and *Corpse Killer*. The 32X was being choked by slightly enhanced carts like *WWF Raw* and *World Series*, and more of the DP stuff. The rest is history.

But I am here, now, to defend the 32X and it's way too early demise. Sega actually went on record to 'apologize' for it and claimed it a mistake. And that is not right.

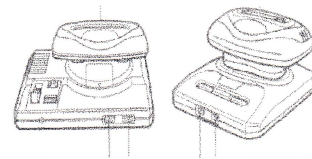
First off, if Sega is too apologize for anything, it should be the Activator and the Menacer. Second, no system is a mistake (well...maybe the CD-I and the Jaguar...)and should not be thrown away. The 32X has some great games, and had Sega continued developing for it, it would have seen some more great games. *Virtua Fighter*, one of the systems last games, proved this point. No, it didn't have the same polygon count nor CD music, but for being on the cartridge format and being \$350 cheaper than it's Saturn brother (it only came with the system) it was an incredible achievement. Sega also pulled off some minor options that the Saturn version lacked.

The other big mistake was not taking advantage of the 32X/CD combo. The demons at Digital Pictures were left to dismantle the poor machine with 'Remastered versions' of logs like *Corpse Killer* and *Slam City*. All one needs to do is look at *Silpheed* and *Shadow Squadron* to see what the 32X/CD was capable of. As mentioned earlier, the system became bogged down in minor Genesis upgrades, and both Sega and it's third party companies are to blame for this. Also, does anyone remeber any advertising for the system, other then the *MK II* adds? I thought so.

So now it's 1997, and we are all swimming in 32/64 Bit technology. Why get a 32X? For quite a few reasons.

The 32X in it's current state is a bargain bin dream. The system is

The Sega 32X



roughly \$20 now, and most games can be picked up new from \$5 to \$20. The system has some awesome games that never got fair treatment, or have no heirs in the current market. If your curious about picking one up, I highly recommend the following games.

Shadow Squadron: One of the system's greatest games, this is a 3D spaceship shoot em up. The polygon graphics are great, and the challenge is dead on. There are two different ships to choose from, and you can customise the colors of the enemy fighters. The only downfall is the music. Bad stuff there. Turn the volume off and enjoy a great game.

Chaotix: This was Knuckle's starring solo role, and featured all new characters for him to team up with. The game featured a new 'tag team' set up where the two characters were attached by a string. This helped for vaulting players into higher levels and makes two player mode more interesting. 25 levels plus 5 bonus levels are given.

Kolobri: This is similar to Ecco the Dolphin, but with a humming bird instead. The graphics are some of the most gorgeous I have ever seen, and there are huge levels to fly through. Some stages present quite a challenge. The music is pretty good too.

Mortal Kombat II: Believe it or not, this is better than the SNES and the Saturn versions. Lots of animation frames, all the moves, rich background graphics, and decent sound effects, this is a must for MK freaks. It's still the best MK overall.

Virtua Fighter: As mentioned earlier, this is an incredible feat and a great game as well. It's also kind of hard to find, so collectors may want to scoop it up.

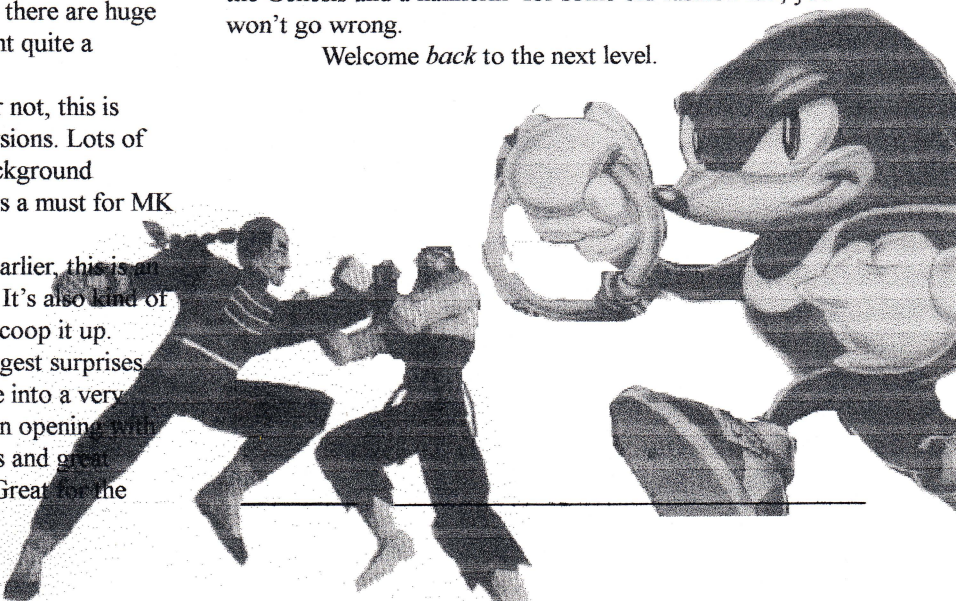
Tempo: This was one of the biggest surprises. Ignore the horrible box artwork and dive into a very fun(if a little too cute) platform game. An opening with full speech rap, followed by lots of levels and great graphics, this was and is a sleeper hit. Great for the kiddies.

Sega's *Afterburner*, *Shadow Squadron*, *Virtua Fighter* and *Chaotix* helped the 32X gain popularity

Afterburner/Space Harrier: These two carts were god sends for their time. Both are roughly 95% arcade perfect in terms of graphics and sound, and still retain all the fun. They may not be hot sellers once the *Sega Ages* disc comes out for Saturn, but if you don't have one, grab 'em for your 32X.

There are quite a few more games out for the system, but these stood out as the best ones in my book. If you bought a 32X and all the above listed games, it wouldn't cost more then about \$100-150. It's a great buy, if for *Tempo* and *Shadow Squadron* alone. If you've got the Genesis and a hankerin' for some old fashion fun, you won't go wrong.

Welcome back to the next level.



PLAYSTATION REVIEWS

The Wildest *Fantasy* Yet.

There comes a time in a person's hobby that takes them to a new plane of thinking, that rewrites everything they knew about video games and will forever change their view on them. I give you *Final Fantasy VII*.

By now most of you who picked it up have probably beaten it, while the few and the proud have truly finished it, but I must let you know how much this game changed my gaming life.

It was a calm February afternoon, when I received my copy of the import *FF VII*. I went home the first night and played till two in the morning. I was shocked, impressed, and pretty much blown away. When I play video games, I try and become the character I'm playing. I take on their emotions, their way of thinking, and so on. Call me crazy, make funny faces at me, but that's how I play. And since that fateful evening on February second, I am still in awe of Cloud Strife.

Now, I know there are people out there that have issues with Square's masterpiece, like how it's 'too short' or that the ending 'doesn't

make sense' and other rubbish. I limit break all of you a thousand times over. Let's talk length. How many of you cried about *Beyond the Beyond* being too long/hard? How many of you said you beat *Suikoden* in a day? Keeping quiet, eh? I thought so. This game is just the right length and all of you know it. I love the people who say they beat in a week. They don't tell you they spent about seven hours a day playing it, which makes for a fifty hour game. Remember people, it's measured in hours, not days.

And the ending, my god the ending. What other game gives you richly detailed sixteen minute CG ending? What other game has roughly three hundred names in the credits? Please tell me, I'm curious.

Now let's really look at the game. After being introduced to a seamless intro and then placed in the game, you are taken away by unbelievable graphics, and superb detail in the backgrounds. The spells are more animated and alive than most games on the market. Don't even get me started on the Bahamut Zeo spell. Or what of the game's cinemas? No load time into most of them, and the cinemas match the game graphics. How many titles can make that claim? Look at the 3D effect on the towns and caves. No longer are we stuck in a birds eye view like so many titles before us. You actually see your on screen persona walk into the distance, or come right smack into the screen.

And the story line! What other game on the system can touch the intricacies and twists that Square has spun here? From minor love triangles to treachery to sadness, no other game has ever moved me like *FF VII*. For the first time, we have a smart, adult orientated concept and adult orientated themes. The dark and forbidding shadows of Midgar and the cold touch of the Forgotten World are the new.



Final Fantasy's Tifa takes a break to take a picture with Dangerboy.

PLAYSTATION REVIEWS

RAVE REVIEW

standards by which games will be judged. I bid thee rosy castles of yesteryear a fond farewell.

Or the music, some of the most beautiful I have ever heard. No it may not reach the majestic proportions of *FF VI*, but it's not supposed to. This is not a majestic world, it is a world in danger of dying in the hands of a madman. And the music fits it to a T. The 4 CD sound track is awaiting my purchase as we speak.

A game like *Final Fantasy VII* is a role player's dream come true. There are so few words in my poor little vocabulary that can aptly describe this game. If you are truly a game player, and live for RPG's, this is your heaven.

A game that, for the first time, we got the better, nay, the superb version over our eastern brothers. The boy and girls at Square decided to add a whole nother minute and a half to one of the cinemas. They also threw in some animation, to liven up the backgrounds, like glowing candles and moving machine parts. They also added two more 'element weapons' that you can fight optionally, and they made the original 'weapon' a fightable character. They even unlocked certain materia that was locked out in the Japanese version. Square has gone above and beyond the call of duty, and it shows.

Many people claim that the Playstation has already reached it's peak and that games won't look any better then this. If there is still any doubt about this false concept, I give you Square's evidence. Look at *Tobal 1*, and note the incredible difference in *Tobal 2*. Now look their first PS *Final Fantasy* and picture the second one. Quite a game, no?

In the world of RPGs to come, I hold one belief; *Grandia* will set new records for Saturn,

Zelda will sell N64's like there is no tomorrow, but nothing, nothing will ever touch *VII* in the months to come. And in the foreseeable future, only one title will ever displace its crown.

And that is *FF VIII*.

Final Fantasy VII

Squaresoft

1 Player

3 CDs

Available Now

Overall Review: 100%



NINTENDO 64 REVIEWS

Shaken, but not Stirred

8 months late and Rumble Pak in tow, 007 finally hits home.

The name is Boy. DangerBoy. My mission is to fill you in on a 'rare' event; An N64 game that I love. *Golden Eye 007*, the newest game from the Rare/Nintendo camp is a smashing good time.

The game is set up 'Doom' style, with a not so new twist; the Sniper mode. Set up similar to *MDK*'s 'head cam', with certain guns you can zoom in and take an up close and personal look at a bad guy before you use your license to kill. The level of detail in the 'bodily harm' department is really scary. The terrorists react to your shot depending on where you shoot them. So much in fact that if you shoot someone in the, um... 'family jewels'...they'll actually reach down in pain! If you shoot them in the chest, blood stains their clothing, shoot them in the neck, and they choke to death! Rare gets the patented 'Dangerboy Sadistic-Grin-of-Approval' for that little feature.

Weapons are also taken straight from the movie, with guns ranging from Bond's trusted Walther PPK to throwing knives to a big sniper rifle. In a new twist, you can actually use the butt of the sniper gun! Also, you can sometimes use two guns at the same time, which makes for twice the carnage.

The enemy intelligence is quite good. Soldiers will react to gun shots heard, they'll work their way around an object to get behind you, and best yet, they have personality! I was in the jungle, waiting from 50 paces out, staring through my M-16 scope at my current victim walking around. Just as I was about to pull the trigger, he stopped, rubbed his nose, and sneezed. I stopped what I was doing and just stared. He sneezed. I killed him (heh heh) and moved on to see what else they did. Others talked on their radio, and some scratched they're head. Again, this level of detail is jaw dropping.

The graphics still have that N64 look, with Rare and Nintendo still being the only people who know how to use the anti-aliasing correctly. There is minimum 'fog', and

the texture don't repeat that badly. The only real problem I had was with the arctic stage and certain hallways. In the snow, with the fog in the distance, everything looks the same. With the hallways, there was no real discerning mark to tell you what floor you're on. Second, there's no map, which makes it real 'fun' in the above stages. It may be one of the hidden cheats, but I doubt it. Phooey on that problem.

The sounds are great, with various effects for the bullet holes, death sounds, and other on screen items. The music was really nice, although it did get repetitive a few times. The opening features a guitar version of the traditional 007 theme, and only helps to pull you in to the game.

The difficulty settings have wide enough range to please any gamer, with each successive setting requiring more tasks to perform and harder enemies. Some stages were nuts, even on the easiest setting. The level where you must escape with Natalya took about ten tries, and even then I had the living daylights beaten out of me.

The multi-player mode was great, except for two minor flaws. One, they give you a radar. Gee, kinda makes hiding rather pointless. That and there's a gun that can kill you in two shots. Fun, but it could have been better.

As an overall package, *Golden Eye 007* is a crowning achievement on a system that so desperately needs it. From a genre point, it now takes the crown as the king of corridor games. This however, can not hide the fact that it was about 7-8 months late. For such a severe push back, the aforementioned glitches should have been taken care of. The ending credits hint at the possibility of there being a second chance to work on her Majesty's secret service. But if the wait is just as bad for the sequel as it was for this one, we might never get the chance.

Here's hoping Rare never says never.

Golden Eye 007

Rare/Nintendo

1-4 players

Rumble Pak compatible

Available Now

Overall Review: 90%



NINTENDO 64 REVIEWS

M.R.C. is D.O.A.

The Nintendo 64 is still lacking a need for speed...

Dangerboy here, in the pit at the Game Rave race track. I'm currently finishing the testing of the N64's newest racer, *Multi Racing Championship*.

After the vomit inducing *Cruis'n USA* and the easy *Mario Kart*, I was quite curious to see how the new game would fare. After seeing the blah box artwork and the so-so opening, I was kind of worried. After playing it, I was real worried.

MRC can best be described as *Rage Racer* meets *Rally Cross* meets *Sega Rally*. The game has several courses with a few cars, and the ability to alter certain aspects of the car. The courses have several forks in them, and this offers new paths to take.

The first thing I noticed in MRC when playing was how cruddy the graphics are, and many seemed copied from *Rage Racer* and *ESPN Extreme*. The actual content isn't bad, but the fog is on thick and thin and the anti aliasing blurs everything together. It's like watching a badly dithered mpeg movie. I wasn't kidding about certain things being copied, and it seems like the easy track was made out of *Rage's* temple stage and *Extreme's* jungle stage. Also, the fog gets real annoying on parts, like the tight turning hills, where you can't tell where you're going half the time. Also, when you're going through tunnels, the cars headlights come on. The problem being that the tunnel is lit enough to see without the lights, so that little feature is a big waste. The first tire just blew.

The sound department is a joke, and Ocean/Genki should be ashamed of themselves. The music is sub-par (but waaaaaaaay better then *Cruis'n*) and the sound effects just plain suck. And the announcer... somebody get him some Vivarin and Mountain Dew. I kid you not, I swore I heard him snore a few times. These feeble ear offerings only worsened an already troubled game. The second tire just went flat.

And then there's the control issue. Oh boy, big problems here. First and foremost, at the default settings, this control sucks. Trying to drive a dump truck backwards at the Indy 500 and place first would be easier then this. But, not to let that bother me, I quickly went to the customizable car section and began my labor. After the first fifteen attempts at fixing the control failed, I broke out the abacus and my official 'Ralph Nader Guide to Safe Driving' book and started doing the calculations. After an hour of this and that, I finally had it. The car did what I

wanted. Wiping the tears of joy, I went back to the race and began again. First place going into the final lap, all is right with the world. And then something evil happened. The car died. Just like that, my steering, my tires, everything I had just worked on disappeared, and I lost control of the vehicle. Dumb founded, I went back to the option screen and checked my car. Hmm, I thought, everything is still in order. So I tried again, and sure as sin, I hit that third lap and the car lost all control again. Ladies and germs, I hate to tell you this, but MRC suffers from bouts of amnesia. And this can not be tolerated. To be in first the whole time, and then lose because the game 'forgot' your setting is inexcusable. The third tire just flew off the hub..

And then there are the tracks. Yes they have different paths, but they all lead back to the same place. And, once you figure out the shortest route, the rest of the track becomes useless. Also, the weather conditions are nice, but I don't think the same track would have sun, snow and rain on it at the same time. Oh, I can't forget the terrain problem. The tracks consist of concrete and off road conditions, but if your customized car is even a tad towards favoring one of the above, the other becomes a sheet of ice that you'll never have control on.

In a word, MRC just plain sucks. There were some wonderful ideas and concepts, but they never came through. It's on a crash course straight into the grave, and I hope you'll stay far away. Oh yeah, I blew up that last tire.

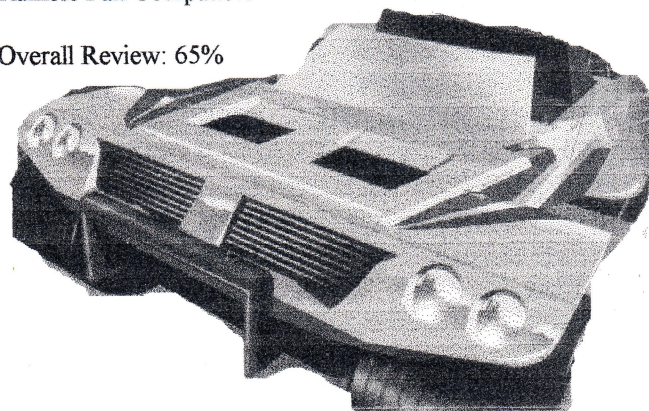
Multi Racing Championship

Genki/Ocean

1-2 Players

Rumble Pak Compatible

Overall Review: 65%



SATURN REVIEWS

Wascally Wabbit

Electronic Arts of Japan lets go of their animal instincts.

If there is ever a genre that will probably never die, it is the one on one fighter. Within that genre are many categories, such as weapon based, serious, 3D or 2D, and so on. But one of the more overlooked sections is the comical fighter. So few games can be put into that category, and it's a shame. Capcom is currently working on *Pocket Fighters*, and *Waku Waku 7* does a great job, but overall, it's been lacking. Enter Electronic Arts of Japan.

That's right EA. While EA of USA is giving us our sports and 'Strike' titles, the eastern half has served up this little gem of a game, *Rabbit*.

The premise of *Rabbit* is like this. Each fighter has their own set of moves, but they also have a 'creature feature'. This is an animal counterpart that you can summon to help you. As you fight the other opponents, and beat them, you'll be able to take their animals and use them as well (almost like *Marvel's Gems*). The idea is wonderful, and after a few rounds, it becomes second nature.

The control in *Rabbit* is like an SNK game. Standard punch and kick buttons, the animal button, and the extra feature button. All the moves are performed SF style, with the typical fireballs and uppercut moves given. The control was overall quite nice and I didn't really have a problem with it.

The areas where *Rabbit* flops are the graphics and animations. The backgrounds are pretty stiff although they contain some nice detail. The characters are drawn in an almost *Dark Stalker* style, and the influences of characters like Morrigan and John Talbain can be seen. It's just that the frame rate is not up to par with other

games out there, like *Samurai 3* or *Marvel Super Heroes*. For instance, one of the super moves visually hits about five times, but the meter reads sixteen. The frame rate can sometimes throw you off, but nothing bad. Also, the zooming feature slows down the game a little (no, not PS *Samurai 3* slow) but not enough to screw up your combo timing. Otherwise, the animation it does have is great, each character has enough of distinction to show personality.

The music has some high and low points, while some sound effects seem to be missing. The opening cinema is about average too, having the standard 'show every character' theme to it. The voices were pretty decent, although it did sound like the Saturn was having laryngitis problems here and there.

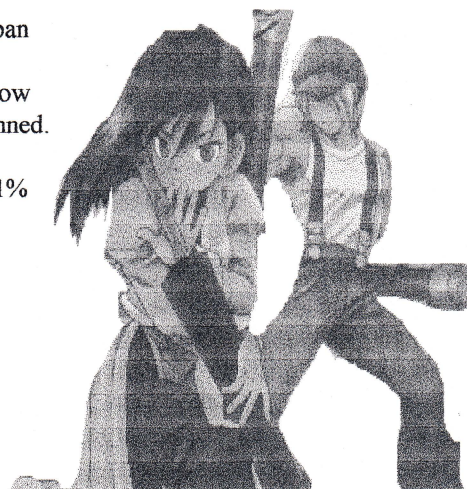
The difficulty was straight out of an SNK motherboard. The normal characters are a walk through, but the second you hit the bosses, wham! Instant continue screen. I kid you not, I took every character twice against those bosses, in the same game! Patience is a plus with those guys.

As fighting games go, from the visual aspect, *Rabbit* would score quite average, and probably wouldn't fare well. However, when combined with the animal feature, the wacky characters, and the wild moves, it becomes an enjoyable if flawed game. Despite my gripes, and my low score I'll admit that I had a great time with *Rabbit*. If you looking for something out of the ordinary, I recommend trying it. And hey, this is EA. Be thankful we didn't get *Shaq Fu 2*... (shudder)...

Rabbit

Electronic Arts Japan
1-2 Players
Import Available now
No US release planned.

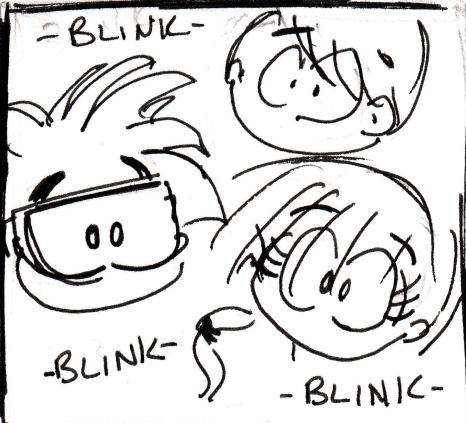
Overall Review: 81%

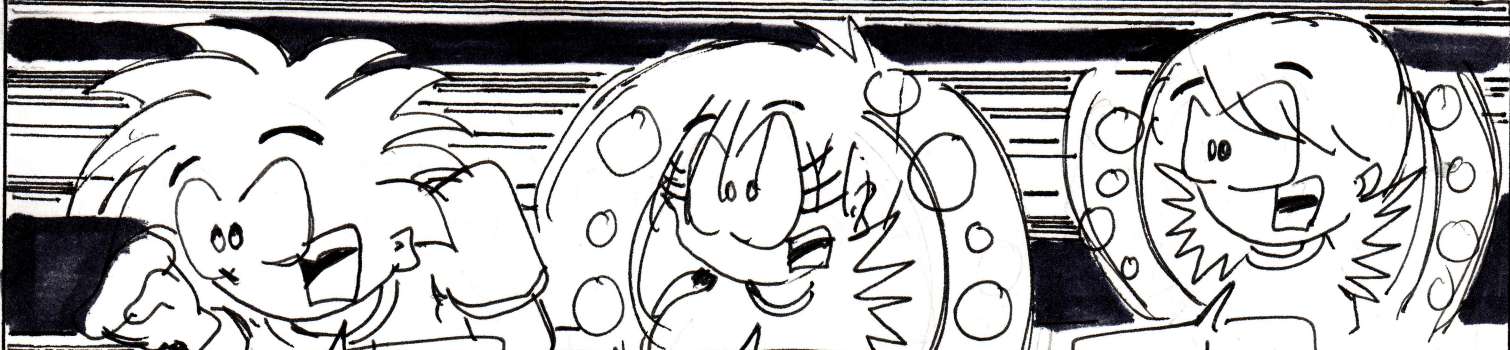


Zzt!
GREETINGS!
I AM GOING
TO BLOW UP
VIDEO GAMIA.
TOODLES!

HA-HA-HA.

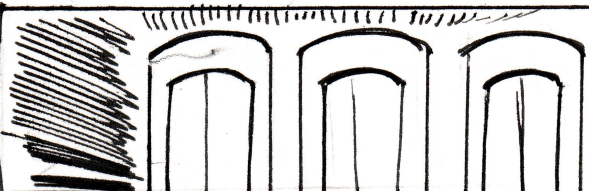
THE END.

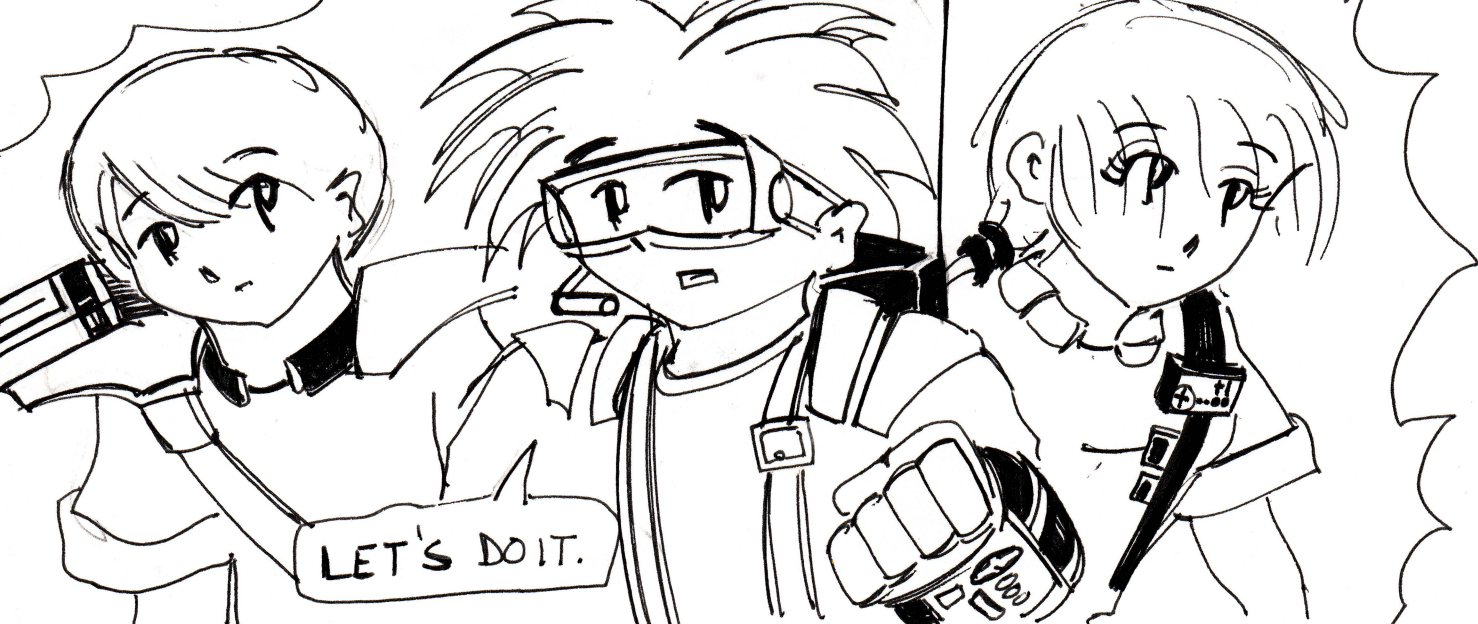
-BLINK-

-BLINK- **-BLINK-**


**CRIFE. QUICK
TO THE
RESET TUBES!**
**-ACK!- THIS
IS GONNA BE
SOME FIRST JOB!**
**YIPE! I
DIDN'T HAVE
BREAKFAST!**

-CLICK!

CLICK!


RESET!


LET'S DO IT.

TO BE CONTINUED!

IN GAME RAVE
NEW VOLUME ONE!

**COMING IN
1998:**

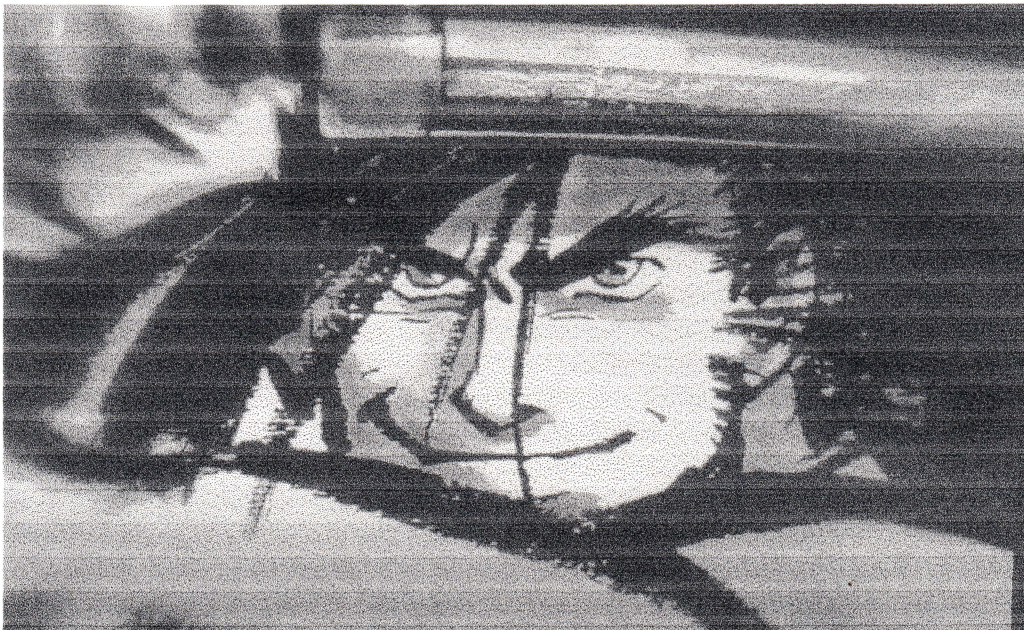
GAMERAVE

New Volume 1

**See You
Soon!**

Game Quote of the Month:

“Let’s blade boogie!”



-Haohmaru
*Samurai Shodown 4:
Amakusa's Revenge*

GAMERAVE